

REMARKS

The undersigned notes with appreciation to acceptance of the formal drawings filed September 19, 2001. The undersigned further notes with appreciation the designation of claims 4-7, 11, and 16-19 as being drawing to allowable subject matter.

Claims 1 - 21 remain active in this application. Claim 20 has been amended to improve form and to clarify the subject matter contained therein. Claim 20 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,253,188 to Witek. Claims 1-2, 8-10, and 12-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek. Claims 3 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek in view of U.S. Patent 4,381,554 to Reach. Claim 21 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek in view of U.S. Patent 6,725,235 to Dyer. These rejections are respectfully traversed in view of the remarks below.

The present invention discloses a system and method accommodating records of devices having multi-parameter configurations that uses an identifier. The identifier involves assigning values to available options for parameters of a configuration and using the assigned values to construct a numerical/symbolic identifier representing the configuration. The constructed identifier may then be used for identification purposes, stored in a database as a field or as an entry in a list or an array, easily searched and easily sorted by rapid numerical processing. Use of the system and method of the present invention results in easier storage, searching and retrieval of information for multi-parameter configurations. The system and method further provides for the unique identification of every possible configuration, allowing the addition of parameters, accommodating expansion of a range of options per parameter without requiring conversion of existing configuration information and being compatible with existing data storage, searching and retrieval techniques. None of the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest such a system and method as contemplated by the present invention.

It should be noted at the outset that none of the references cited by the Examiner teach or suggest a system and method accommodating records of devices having multi-parameter configurations that facilitates storage, searching and retrieval of computerized information by providing unique identification for every possible configuration.

Witek describes a system for a computerized, interactive classified advertisement system and method for operating the system over the Internet (see abstract and col. 1, lines 5-21, in Witek). Witek uses a multi-digit numerical value to represent each of a plurality of distinct menu texts and provide each parameter as a separate field in record selection tables. Records are identified by consecutive numbers or number and offset, whereas the parameters of interest in accordance with the present invention are respective digits of a single numerical/symbolic field such that each identifier corresponds to a particular distinct (but not necessarily unique) configuration facilitating processing such as inventory control or accessing other data reflecting the configuration. With reference to Figure 3 and column 11, line 40 - column 17, line 62 of Witek, it can be seen that the ad searching structure is comprised of a category/subcategory hierarchal searching system and method admitted to be "well known in the art." Particularly, Witek teaches the use of a binary technique to search the classified ad database (see columns 13-14 in Witek). Although a binary technique can reduce searching time, they are generally designed to work irrespective of the number of fields per record, even where each field has an unlimited number of possible entries. Furthermore, binary techniques fail to leverage characteristics of records that may facilitate search. In this regard, Witek acknowledges that when the number of categories and/or subcategories increase, the ease of use decreases (see column 13, lines 10-13, in Witek). Conversely, the ease of use does not vary in the present invention when the number of parameters and options per parameter increases due to the use of an identifier contained in a single field. In fact, the method and system disclosed in the present invention is specifically designed to accommodate the addition of parameters and expansion of a range of options per parameter without requiring conversion of existing configuration information. This meritorious effect is supported by identifying a configuration using an identifier having a plurality of digits, said configuration having a plurality of parameters and each

of said parameters having a plurality of options (see claim 1), which is not taught or suggested by Witek. Therefore, Witek fails to anticipate or support a conclusion of obviousness of the subject matter of any claim in the present application.

The Examiner cites Reach as teaching a step of assigning an exponent to each digit of the identifier and the exponent being equal to the digit place minus one (see paragraph 15 in the Office Action). Reach describes a calculator that automatically evaluates numerical answers while using minimal storage capacity and avoiding the application of complex stored programs (see abstract and columns 1-2 in Reach). While Reach may teach the “identification of the proper positive or negative exponent of [a] radix multiplier identified”, it does not teach an identification with respect to assigning an exponent to each digit of an identifier. Specifically, Reach teaches this identification method with respect to conversion of digital numbers into an “easy-to-read form suitable for printing with decimal points properly indicated” (see column 2, lines 53-56, in Reach). The Reach identification method is not used in connection with the facilitation of storage, searching and retrieval of computerized information. Therefore, it would not be obvious to one skilled in the art to combine the Reach identification method with the binary search technique in Witek. Moreover, the identifier of Reach is not compatible with processing by Witek and the proposed modification of Witek would be improper under *In re Gordon*, 221 U.S.P.Q. 1125 (1984), since operation in the intended manner would be precluded.

The Examiner cites Dyer as teaching a step of including an illegal configuration reference if the multi-parameter configuration is not valid for the subject matter. Dyer teaches a method for using a computer system to dynamically represent the state of any device that is comprised of a multitude of sub-systems (see abstract of Dyer). While Dyer may teach the altering of an appearance within a hierarchical model when an integer is an invalid value, it does not teach the inclusion of an illegal configuration if a multi-parameter configuration is not valid based on the subject matter. Specifically, Reach teaches this alteration method with respect to the “invalid value” of an integer symbol by visually changing its appearance (*e.g.*, color, bold, flashing, etc., to change its appearance) (see columns 4-5, and Figure 5, in Dyer). The Dyer alteration method is not used in connection with the facilitation of storage, searching and retrieval of computerized

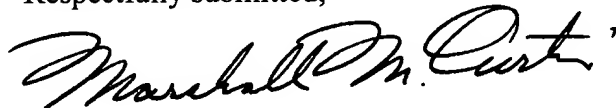
information. Therefore, it would not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the Dyer alteration method with the binary search technique in Witek.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that none of the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, teach nor suggest the system and method contemplated by the present invention and the rejection of claims 1-21 is clearly in error and untenable. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103 of claims 1 – 21, and the allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Since all rejections, objections and requirements contained in the outstanding official action have been fully answered and shown to be in error and/or inapplicable to the present claims, it is respectfully submitted that reconsideration is now in order under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b) and such reconsideration is respectfully requested. Upon reconsideration, it is also respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is therefore respectfully requested.

If an extension of time is required for this response to be considered as being timely filed, a conditional petition is hereby made for such extension of time. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 50-2041.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marshall M. Curtis", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marshall M. Curtis

Reg. No. 33,138

Whitham, Curtis & Christofferson, P. C.
11491 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 340
Reston, Virginia 20190

(703) 787-9400

Customer Number: **30743**